

## SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

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Tuesday, November 17, 2020, 5:30 p.m, via Zoom

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Present: Selectboard members Richard Baker, Christopher Martin, and Laurie Colgan; Town Clerk Bobbi Brimblecombe; Visitors Kale and Amanda Barberi, Marge and Lew Christie, Janet Sing, Kevin Sing, Laura Steenburg, Elisabeth Bilar, Terri \_\_\_\_, Laura Harding

At 5:30 p.m. the meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Martin

**Changes or additions to the agenda:** OSC Leases

**Public Comment:**

**Minutes:** Approved the minutes of 8/25, 10/29, 11/5, 11/11

**Dog Complaint:** Regarding the complaint about dogs belonging to Janet Sing, Chris asked Kevin Sing for an update. Kevin indicated that the dogs are chained up and inside the fences. Janet stated that her dog's neck is so large that it is difficult to find a collar that fits him. The nylon collar that she had been using worked for 3 years but when the nylon/leather wore out, it stopped working. She immediately bought chain collars. Laura asked the Barberis whether there have been any more instances of the dogs being out. Amanda stated that one of the white dogs was in the road on Friday. Kevin stated that it must have been the puppy. Chris asked how old the puppy is because she has been in heat. Janet thinks she is about 6 months old.

Chris asked how far the fence extends. Janet stated that the fence extends about 350' along the front of the property, and surrounds the house and barns. The dogs are entirely within an enclosure. The fence is a 6 ½ foot wire fence attached to a cattle fence, so no dogs can jump over it. She is putting logs around it to prevent other dogs from digging under to get in. Rich asked how the dogs could get out if they are fully enclosed. Janet is unsure how they are getting out. Goran is chained inside the fence, and must have broken loose when she was swapping out a section of the fence. She stated that she does not want them escaping any more than the neighbors do. She has also bought shock collars for them.

Amanda stated that they have seen the dogs loose inside the fence, so she doesn't believe they are always chained. They are also barking all the time. Kale stated that the goats are always out, and if they can get out, dogs can get out. Janet stated that the goats were in a separate area, and since they have been out, she had them slaughtered. When the Barberis indicated that the goats are still there, Janet clarified that she had the wethers and bucks slaughtered. She still has does but they don't travel.

Laurie wondered if the Board should issue another order that will encompass all animals or all dogs, since the first order only included one specific dog. Chris doesn't see that the Board has a reason for a protective order for the female at this point because they haven't had any reports of her showing aggression.

Marge Christie stated that it is hard to understand waiting until an incident happens to do something. She stated that the dog that bit her was bred to guard sheep. If the female is the same breed, she might do the same thing. Rich stated that the Board can't do a protective order based on the breed. Chris stated that at this point the female is only guilty of running at large, and the Town has historically given a warning for the first offense.

Chris notified Janet that the Town received two affidavits alleging abuse. Elisabeth Bilar asked about the details of the affidavits. She is a customer of Janet's, and she is here in support of Janet. She asked for details in the affidavits. Rich read one of them aloud. Janet stated that the affidavit is 99% false. She did "bonk the males on the head" with a 2-foot level because they were surrounding the female. She stated that her pit bull has a long-standing leg injury and she has vet records. Rich read the second affidavit. Janet stated that she pulled the dog back into the fence to keep him from getting out of the fence.

Laurie stated that given the complaints from the neighbors and the allegations of abuse, she urged Janet to make a strong effort to keep the dogs taken care of safely and humanely. She stated that the Town has also received conflicting reports about the care and maintenance of the dogs. Janet stated that she loves her dogs and they are well cared for. Laurie feels that the Board needs draft a formal letter to the Sings stating the need to properly care for the animals. Elisabeth stated that Janet has been cooperative and non-combative. Laurie stated that there is a need to document that Janet has agreed to take the required measures. Rich agreed that there should be a letter and Janet should sign it, agreeing that she will take the required measures. Janet doesn't think a letter is necessary because of the recording of the meeting and because of how much she has spent to contain them. The Board will send the letter and they asked that Janet sign it.

Elisabeth asked that the neighbors be instructed to inform Janet whenever her dogs are out. The Board stated that they can't order the neighbors to contact Janet. Lew Christie stated that when the dog tried to kill his wife, they drove to Janet's house and tried to get her to come out so they could inquire whether the dog has been vaccinated, but she didn't come out.

**COVID Update:** The Old Schoolhouse Common is closed to the public. The Library is currently doing curbside pickup, and the Town Clerk's Office is closed but the clerk is in the office to help people through the window, by phone and by email. The Library has asked to have the side entrance improved so that the library could reopen without having people enter the rest of the building. The Board discussed what would be required to make the entryway safe, and how long the building would need to remain closed. The Board will ask Will Schwarz to take a look at the side entrance and get estimates for a new door, railing, and some type of roof or snow guard to prevent snow from building up in front of the door. The Selectboard agreed that the building will remain closed for at least two weeks, and until the next meeting. Bobbi notified the Selectboard that the Town's land records are now online so researchers don't need to come in to do research.

**Personnel Policy:** Federal law requires employers to provide 80 hours of sick time for anyone who has to quarantine based on a physician's recommendation. Rich asked whether we would need to provide the sick time for people who choose to travel and have to quarantine when they come

back. The Board will add something to the personnel policy that all leave has to be pre-approved by the Selectboard, so that the Town is not responsible to pay for quarantine time for employees that choose to travel outside Vermont.

**Mutual Aid:** The Board discussed the possibility of having an agreement with area towns to cover for each other in case the road crews get sick. Chris will contact the Plainfield Selectboard to see if they are interested.

**Onion River Road:** Chris will contact the Road Crew about the complaints the Board has received regarding a pothole.

**Executive Session:** At 7:15, Chris moved to enter executive session to discuss a legal matter. Laurie seconded – all in favor. The Board returned to open session at 7:30 p.m.

**Reappraisal:** The Board discussed the draft contract. Chris moved to approve the contract with the amendment that exempt properties will also be appraised, and to authorize Rich to sign it. Laurie seconded – all in favor.

**Folsom Hill Road:** Chris has asked Green Mountain Power to remove the extra pole. They agreed but they are backed up right now so they don't know when they will get to it.

**Efficiency Vermont:** The Board authorized Bobbi to sign the agreement for reimbursement for thermostats.

**Fill Policy:** The Board discussed what should be in a policy.

**Recycling:** Paul Tomasi from the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District is willing to come to a meeting of the two towns to offer suggestions for how to address the recycling center costs. Bobbi will contact the Town of Cabot to ask to be put on the agenda of one of their Selectboard meetings.

**OSC Leases:** Bobbi will include wording prohibiting window signs in the 2021 leases

**Mowing:** The Board authorized Rich to sign the contracts for mowing at the Old Schoolhouse, the covered bridge, and the cemeteries. The contracts were previously approved but Chris is not able to come in to sign them as planned.

**Expenses, Permits & Payroll:** Selectboard members read and signed reports for General Expenses and Payroll and authorized Rich to sign them.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bobbi Brimblecombe, Town Clerk

The foregoing is a true copy of the Minutes of the November 17, 2020 Selectboard Meeting.  
A True Record. Attest, \_\_\_\_\_, Town Clerk

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